(b) The following four projects were identified in the first phase:—

(i) Wandoor Scuba-diving Resort,
(ii) Corbyn's Cave Beach Resort,
(iii) Port Blair Marine Centre, and
(iv) Radhanagar Beach Resort.

It was decided to first conduct a study of the carrying capacity of the specific areas for the four identified projects. The UNDP, in consultation with the Ministries of Tourism and Environment & Forests have since identified an organisation for undertaking the carrying capacity study.

Development of Special Tourism Area

2134. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking any steps for identification and development of special tourism areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress made so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (KUMARI UMA BHARTI): (a) to (c) In consultation with the State Governments, the following areas have been identified for development as Special Tourism Areas:—

(i) Bekal Beach in Kerala
(ii) Diu
(iii) Muttukadu in Tamil Nadu
(iv) Puri in Orissa
(v) Sindhudurg in Maharashtra

Government of Kerala has constituted Bekal Tourism Authority in 1992 and Ministry of Tourism has released Rs. 1.90 crores in March, 1992 for the preparation of Master Plan. Bekal Resort Development Corporation was set up in 1996 and land measuring 189.87 hectares has been acquired by the Corporation from the State Government. Government of Maharashtra has also set up Special

Tourism Authority for development of Sindhudurg. Big hotel chains have identified various sites for construction of hotel accommodation facilities, amusement parks and other tourist attractions in the area.

Relief to Hotel Sector

2135. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that hotel industry is in bad shape for the last three consecutive years and are running in heavy loss; and

(b) whether Government plan to offer any relief to the hotel sector and make this industry once again vibrant and viable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (KUMARI UMA BHARTI): (a) and (b) The Union Government has accorded Export House status to Tourism Units including hotels which are entitled to various benefits. The Union Government also provides various incentives and concessional duty to the approved hotels and hotel projects including income tax exemptions, interest subsidy for 1--3 star and heritage hotels. The State Governments also provide support for Tourism as per policies in their area. Hotels being largely in the private have to deal with ups and downs in market conditions.

Satluj-Yamuna Link Canal

2136. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Satluj-Yamuna Link Canal which was estimated to cost Rs. 176 core has already cost Rs. 600 crore as reported in the Observer dated the 20th October, 1999;

(b) whether it is a fact that the 91 km. stretch of this canal in Haryana has already been completed;